

## ***Resolution for Clarifying North Carolina's Motorcycle Helmet Law***

**WHEREAS**, in 2005, there were 3,313 reported motorcycle collisions on North Carolina's highways that resulted in 132 persons killed and 3,011 persons injured;

**WHEREAS**, in 2005 motorcycles represented three tenths of one percent (0.3%) of vehicle miles traveled in North Carolina, but represented 8.9% of the total crash fatalities;

**WHEREAS**, studies indicate that per mile traveled a motorcyclist is approximately 32 times more likely to die in a crash than someone riding in a passenger car;

**WHEREAS**, head injury is a leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes;

**WHEREAS**, an unhelmeted motorcyclist or one wearing a non-compliant helmet, (not meeting Federal Motor Vehicle (FMVSS) 218) is 40% more likely to suffer a fatal head injury and 15% more likely to suffer a nonfatal injury than one wearing a helmet meeting FMVSS 218;

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina motorcyclists involved in crashes, have continued to drive up the cost of the crash tax (crash cost per person) to over \$1,100 per person in North Carolina;

**WHEREAS**, a 2003 national study indicated that 14% of helmets being worn were of the non-compliant novelty type that provide no protection in a crash. In more recent observations in North Carolina it appears that that number would be closer to 20-30%.

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina's G.S. 20-140.4 is difficult if not impossible to enforce due to the vague definition of a compliant helmet;

**WHEREAS**, strengthening current North Carolina motorcycle helmet laws is consistent with the mission of the Executive Committee for Highway Safety; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Executive Committee for Highway Safety unanimously and strongly supports revising North Carolina General Statute §20-140.4 to replace statement: "**2) Unless the operator and all passengers thereon wear safety helmets of a type approved by the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.**" To read "**2) Unless the operator and all passengers thereon properly wear on their head with retention strap properly secured, safety helmets of a type that complies with Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 218.**"

*Submitted By:*  
*Susan Coward, Chair*  
*June 2006*

**Revised June 15, 2006**

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